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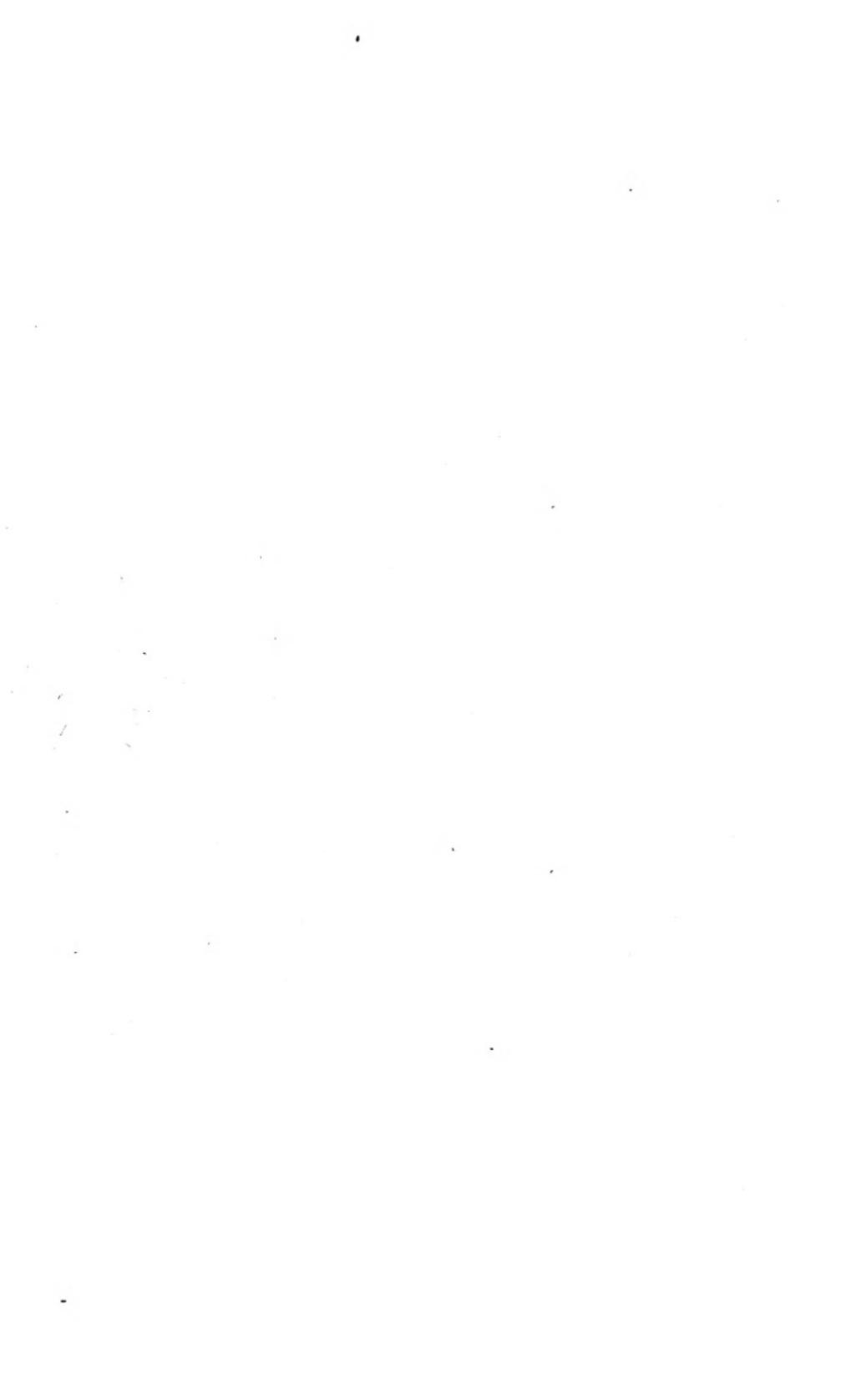
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.





Bartimaeus

A POEM

BY

ALFRED PAUL PHILLIPS.

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DANBURY.

There is a beautiful simplicity in the blind man's petition to the Great Healer, as narrated by St. Mark, the Evangelist, immeasurably more impressive than loftiest rhetoric, and perhaps more acceptable to the Author of all prayerful thought.

Had he but mind to say
Things unfathomably deep;
As would make e'en angels weep,
Christ may have gone His way.

Grand words, "Receive thy sight;"
Not for birth, nor ransom great,
Stainless life, inviolate,
Saw, through simple faith, the light.

THE AUTHOR.

And they came to Jericho, and as He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimeus, the son of Timeus, sat by the highway-side begging.

And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.

And many charged him that he should hold his peace; but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.

And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called.

And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; He calleth thee.

And he, casting away his garments, rose, and came to Jesus.

And Jesus answered, and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight.

And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

Mark x: 46-52.

BARTIMAEUS.



One sat at the wayside begging, and blind had he been from birth,
Or yet had seen the vault of heaven, nor looked on mother earth;
Nothing in life could he like fellow man compute,
Height of mountain, depth of vale, size of bird or brute;
O, hopeless life! know thou, whils't other men can see
The changing night and day, there is no sight for thee!

Now, as he sits in dull despair awaiting some passer by,
He hears the tramp of the Roman guard, and neighing of horses nigh,
Coming up from Jericho; and along the way
Is heard the clash of arms, the sound of cymbals gay;
Then, within the moment a glittering cavalcade
Is halting near the beggar in the palm trees' shade.

The stalwart soldiers gathered there made Bartimæus their jest,
And one with shaft of a mighty spear, struck at the blind man's breast,
Saying to companions, "Remember you the day
When batch of carrion like this was thrown for lions' play
Into the great arena, and how the wild beasts rent
The hapless dogs as their cries unto the winds were spent?"

Stern were the tones at his elbow, of the Captain's voice that said:
"Dog of a Roman soldier! Is thy pitiless heart so dead?
Know you not this beggar; this Jew bereft of sight,
Would barter away a kingdom for one glimpse of light?
By the gods then hear me! but another word,
So art thou dishonored, stripped of shield and sword!"

In tones of tenderest pity he said to the blind outcast:
"Stranger, One comes on the way whom we from Jericho passed;
They say that He heals the sick, the leper, dumb or blind,
And, if report is true, He must be wondrous kind;
So, as he passes by, make a petition brief;
Who knows but this great Prophet may bring to you relief?

"Anon we'll hear of thee, and; if this Nazarene restores thy sight;
If from those sightless orbs thou see'st through Him the blessed light,
I'll bring my son, loved Marcus from imperial Rome,
For he like thee is blind, that with him I may come;
And, kneeling at the feet of this illustrious Jew,
Plead for my noble boy; this priceless blessing sue."

Then on the legion passed, and, as the tramp of horses died away,
Bartimæus bent to earth, and there in listening silence lay;
Straining his sense to catch the faintest, muffled sound,
Of many sandal'd feet along the sun scorched ground;
Until, with voice of joy, aloud he cries, I hear
The feet of His advance guard coming slowly near!

Oh throbbing heart! Oh pulses loudly beating, from whose mighty strain
The blood has rushed tumultuous like to sightless face again;
Now is your time, call out, for He is passing by,
And, amidst the multitude, He'll hear your pleading cry—
"Jesus, Son of David! have mercy e'en on me,
Give me to see the light and I will worship Thee!"

Ah ! what is this he hears; no voice Divine can surely answer so;
Not His the hand that sends him back with semblance of a blow?
"Make way and hold thy peace ! would'st thou this concourse stem?
If you have aught to plead, go to Jerusalem!
There, at some distant day, a signed petition bring;
We may perhaps then grant an audience with our King."

There is a sudden hush, the mild rebuke, he hears a stately tread,
Then feels, oh joy! oh ecstasy! hand placed on fevered head.
A voice of wondrous pity, saying to his soul,
"Bartimaeus go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole;"
Nor looking first at earth or sky, at tree, nor sun, nor sod,
Beheld, with love and deep'ning awe, Christ, the Son of God!









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